

## **CHALLENGES FACING LIFE SKILLS AND LIFE ORIENTATION SUBJECT ADVISORS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Subject Advisors of Life Skills (LS) and Life Orientation (LO) provide professional support and guidance to teachers and monitor the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. This study aimed to offer an understanding of the challenges faced by LS/LO Subject Advisors (SUBADVs) in guiding teachers to deliver Physical Education (PE) in schools in the Free State Province of South Africa effectively, within an ecosystemic theoretical framework. This study forms part of a larger research project looking into the effective implementation of PE in South African schools. A qualitative research approach and a grounded theory methodology was adopted. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten SUBADVs in LS and LO in the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phases from the five education districts in the Free State. Data collected were transcribed verbatim and qualitative content analysis was applied. Major challenges encountered by SUBADVs with the implementation of PE are the lack of facilities and resources in schools, a lack of knowledge and understanding of PE by LS/LO teachers and the need for training in this regard. These issues necessitate appropriate in-service training for SUBADVs and teachers alike.*

**Keywords:** Physical education; Life skills; Life orientation; Subject advisors; Teacher support; Curriculum implementation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

South Africa (SA) had a wakeup call during 2014 with regard to the state of the health of the nation, and especially the youth. The 'Healthy Active Kids' SA report unveiled a deterioration in terms of health, physical activity and Physical Education (PE) in schools since 2012 (Discovery Vitality, 2014). This happened subsequent to numerous efforts to encourage children to be more active. In this regard, a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) in the form of a pledge to deliver a sustainable, integrated plan to provide learners with the opportunity to participate in PE and organised sport through the creation of an accessible and implementable school sport-support system. This was already signed in 2011 by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) (DBE, 2011a:7).

The launching of campaigns that exemplify the significance of accessibility of PE and school sport for all children in SA has also been spearheaded since 2014. One example of this focused thrust towards promoting PE was the establishment of the South African Universities Physical Education Association (SAUPEA) in 2016 at a UNICEF PE Forum in Johannesburg. This transpired after incessant discourse amongst universities since 2014, at which time the objective of SAUPEA was articulated to provide direction on research, resource development, education and training (Roux & Burnett, 2014).

The mentioned initiatives and the mandatory nature of both sport and PE to be offered by all schools (SRSA, 2011), confirm the importance to deliver quality PE programmes to ensure that all learners obtain equal benefits. However, curriculum reform in SA over the past 20 years seemingly overwhelmed teachers and required numerous modifications and adjustments within a limited time frame. With time, it became apparent that teachers needed additional support and guidance in respect of the implementation of the (PE) curriculum. This supportive and facilitative role was assigned to Life Skills (LS) and Life Orientation (LO) Subject Advisors (SUBADVs) in district offices of the respective provincial departments of education. The unique challenges SUBADVs face in their supportive role of teachers are often overlooked, specifically in the case of PE, being only one component of LS/LO.

Previous studies mostly focused on the impact of curriculum changes on the state and implementation of PE within LO, and describe the problems and challenges it presents for teachers (Rooth, 2005; Christiaans, 2006; Du Toit *et al.*, 2007; Prinsloo, 2007; Van der Merwe, 2011; Van Deventer, 2011, Perry *et al.*, 2012; Van Deventer, 2012) and learners (Frantz, 2008; Jacobs, 2011). More recently, Cleophas (2014) provided a historical-political perspective on PE and focused on how political issues have (negatively) influenced the school curriculum. Globally, research also confirmed a similar trend to that in SA, namely that several countries struggle to reverse the demise of PE (Hardman, 2010; UNOSDP, 2013; Lee & Cho, 2014). This happens even though PE is internationally regarded as a subject of importance, as emphasised in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) appeal for the development of quality PE programmes, supported by teacher training and the allocation of sufficient resources (CIGEPS, 2011).

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Apart from Van der Merwe (2011), who reports on a Department of Education (DoE) initiated countrywide training of SUBADVs that took place in 2008, an absence of studies about the challenges facing SUBADVs or senior education specialists in the implementation of the LO curriculum(s) seems to exist, especially with regard to PE. If a better understanding of the way in which effective implementation of PE in schools is to be acquired, then a more in-depth examination of the role of the SUBADV seems imperative.

The purpose of this study is to highlight some of the issues and challenges that are currently encountered by SUBADVs with regard to their supportive role in guiding teachers to deliver PE effectively in schools in the Free State Province of South Africa. The primary research question was formulated as follows: What are the challenges that LS/LO SUBADVs experience regarding the implementation of PE in the schools and amongst the teachers they serve? Gaining an in-depth understanding hereof could assist in generating and maintaining the momentum of the drive to support PE in schools.

This research is grounded in the ecosystemic approach developed by Bronfenbrenner (Donald *et al.*, 2014). This approach represents a merger of ecological theory and the systems

approach within the human environment. Ecological theory focuses on the interdependence of people and systems to sustain balance in the environment, and the systems approach highlights that the human environment is made up of interacting and influencing systems.

The point of departure in this study was that SUBADV's of LS/LO are in an interdependent relationship with the LS/LO teachers they serve, and that these two systems impact each other reciprocally through constant interaction. Without appropriate systemic interaction, interdependence and balance in these two systems, it would be highly improbable to develop quality PE implementation as part of LS/LO.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **Curriculum changes (in PE) over the last 20 years**

The ongoing changes and amendments to the curriculum indisputably left its mark on the education system, as Paton-Ash and Wilmot (2015:1) point out: "since the transition to democracy in 1994, the South African government has been trying to address the challenge of providing quality education for all children in schools".

Prior to 1994, PE was recognised as a stand-alone subject, although each provincial department of education approached it in a different way (Mabumo, 2014). Furthermore, PE had its own specific syllabus with two PE periods a week assigned for all grades in accordance with the curriculum (Pelser, 1989). With curriculum reform foremost on the transformation agenda after the 1994 election, the first National Curriculum Statement (NCS), namely Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced at the turn of the century (DBE, 2009). PE was marginalised to a learning outcome of a novel subject, Life Orientation (LO) (Van Deventer & Van Niekerk, 2009).

In 2002, a review report compelled the introduction of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (R-NCS) (DBE, 2009), in order to resolve ongoing implementation issues. A further iteration of the R-NCS took place towards the end of the first decade, and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) were developed for each subject in the NCS by 2011 (DBE, 2011b). In the current CAPS, the subject, Life Skills (LS) in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases and LO in the Senior and Further Education and Training phases, comprise several diverse topics of which PE is one.

PE, as one of the subject areas or topics of LS/LO, focuses on learners experiencing the benefits of regular participation, in order to understand the importance of a physically active lifestyle (DBE, 2011b). Through the adoption of a physically active lifestyle, health is promoted (Ericsson, 2014). Hodges *et al.* (2014:33), however, report that "a large percentage of children and adolescents around the globe are not achieving the recommended health sustaining activity levels".

The World Health Organisation (WHO), furthermore, ascribes the rising levels of physical inactivity as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (WHO, 2010:7). Undeniably, if the general health of the worldwide population is at risk, intervention is paramount. In this regard, it is not surprising that international organisations, such as the European Commission, the WHO, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE) in partnership with UNESCO, developed guidelines for policy-makers to inform the provision of quality PE. These guidelines serve to support

policy-makers (heads of department or senior officials within ministries) by providing a framework to “reshape physical education policy to accelerate the development of several dimensions of human capital ...” (UNESCO, 2015:5).

Unfortunately, according to Stroebel *et al.* (2016), the changes to the PE curriculum from 1994 until the present and the implementation of the post-apartheid curriculum in schools, resulted in serious challenges regarding the delivery of PE in South African schools.

### **Health and physical education**

The ‘Healthy Active Kids’ South Africa (HAKSA) Report Card of 2014 accounts for less than two-thirds of children who participated in weekly PE classes (Discovery Vitality, 2014). Furthermore, the overall score in 2014 with regard to physical activity and PE in schools was a D, which equals 21% to 40% (the grade for each indicator is based on the percentage of children and youth meeting a defined benchmark) (Discovery Vitality, 2014).

This alarming tendency of the decline in PE questions the actual implementation of the current CAPS curriculum (Discovery Vitality, 2014). The importance and delivery of PE for the preservation of PE in schools and the essential role it plays in influencing active life-styles, are recognised in the literature (Green & Collins, 2008; Hardman, 2010).

Green and Collins (2008:226) contend that PE provides all children with “the skills, attitudes, knowledge and understanding for lifelong participation in physical activity and sport”. This argument is supported by Cale and Harris (2013) and Goodway *et al.* (2014) who similarly elaborate on the benefits of regular engagement in PE. In addition, a controlled intervention study (the Swedish Bunkeflo project) by Ericsson (2014) reported positive effects of daily motor skills training and PE. Moreover, Balyi *et al.* (2013) argued that the PE class is the only environment where all children have the opportunity to develop fundamental movement skills, which are considered the building blocks for the learning of sport-specific skills.

Within the above context, the capacity of teachers to deliver PE should be deliberated, as they have the opportunity to enhance the experience for children and lay the foundation for leading healthy lifestyles (Frantz, 2008; Hardman, 2010).

### **Teachers**

The LO teacher is instrumental in putting the curriculum into practice. However, it seems as if the LO teacher’s role was created without considering whether the teachers or the system were ready for such a “fundamental change over such a short space of time” and whether they were sufficiently prepared for the change (DBE, 2009:12). Jacobs (2011) affirms that the theory and the practice of CAPS are detached from each other, which results in ineffectiveness and negative attitudes by both learners and teachers.

Modisaotsile (2012) agrees that a number of challenges contribute to the quality and functionality of education at present, including poor teacher training, unskilled teachers, and a shortage of resources. Insufficient training is probably best illustrated in a study done by Prinsloo (2007) on the implementation of LO programmes at South African schools, who found that a three-day HIV and AIDS course or a two-hour LO workshop, or even being an ex-Guidance, ex-Religion Studies or ex-PE teacher are considered as being ‘qualified’ in LO.

Teaching LO appears to be a transitory duty that changes from year to year (Rooth, 2005). Christiaans (2006) and Prinsloo (2007) suggest that the choice of teachers assigned to LO has an effect on how the subject is perceived. Therefore, as the LO teacher is strategic in the

implementation of quality PE, unqualified teachers certainly do not benefit the status of PE (Van der Merwe, 2011).

Against this backdrop, the situation that subject advisors (SUBADVs) find themselves in currently emerged as a focal point for the researchers. Keep in mind that the SUBADVs' role is to advise and support teachers in LO with its diverse study areas and topics. Hence, with the decline in health and physical activity, SUBADVs should be playing a cardinal role with regard to the effective delivery of PE at schools.

### **Subject Advisors**

The drawn-out and frustrating process of policy development has left its mark on the implementation and delivery of PE. Consequently, teachers were not adequately prepared or appropriately qualified to deliver LO with its diverse study areas (DBE, 2009). Cleophas (2014) emphasises that departmental officials were not pedagogically prepared for the implementation and support of LO either. Nevertheless, SUBADVs of LS and LO are expected to provide guidance and advice to teachers for the practical implementation of LO and PE, often without the necessary background.

According to the *Government Gazette* of 2013 (Notice 300 of 2013) (DBE, 2013:14), a SUBADV is “a specialist office-based educator in a district office or circuit office whose function is to facilitate curriculum implementation and improve the environment and process of learning and teaching by visiting schools, consulting with and advising school principals and teachers on curriculum matters”. The post of a SUBADV “requires the incumbent to be a subject and/or phase specialist in his/her field, demonstrating both depth and content knowledge, as well as its pedagogy” (DoE, 2012:47).

The titanic task of a SUBADV is illustrated best by the roles and responsibilities described in the *Government Gazette* no 35107 (DoE, 2012:47), of which the following is only a condensed account applicable to this article: SUBADVs monitor and support the implementation of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS); monitor and ensure effective education service delivery at school level; are involved in the training in and monitoring of the implementation of CAPS; provide focused support to struggling schools; conduct effective site visits to schools to provide professional support and guidance; attend meetings, conferences and workshops provincially and nationally; ensure alignment of curriculum implementation to national objectives and standards; and present courses and activities. Based on the aforementioned, providing optimal assistance to teachers may be viewed as a unique and difficult challenge.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

In order to comprehend the scope of the challenges faced by SUBADVs regarding their involvement in schools and with teachers, the “focus is on exploring the way they interpret and make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009:24) and how the context of their situation has impacted on constructing their understanding (Grbich, 2007). The investigation followed a qualitative research approach. To explore the extent of the challenges and issues the SUBADVs face and to understand their experiences and perspectives, the study focused on the interpretation of the subjective experiences and meaning attribution of SUBADVs and was therefore approached from an interpretivist paradigm. An attempt was made

to describe the feelings and experiences of the SUBADVs with the intention of developing an understanding of the meaning(s) imparted by them, or “seeing through their eyes” (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:51). Hence, a grounded theory design was adopted, as it is an inductive, comparative, iterative and interactive method (Charmaz, 2006).

### **Participants**

The participants in the study consisted of ten SUBADVs involved in the subject area LS and/or LO in the Free State (FS). During a telephonic interview, SUBADVs were nominated by the Acting Coordinator of the SUBADVs of LS and LO, Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) (Phatoli, 2015). SUBADVs were purposefully selected and approached to take part in the study on the basis of representing all teaching phases and the five education districts of the FS. “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 2009:77). Therefore it was envisaged to include all phases and districts in order to determine whether subject advisors experience similar challenges and difficulties with regard to implementation of the curriculum and support of teachers.

The study covered the five districts, namely the Motheo District (n=2); Lejweleputswa (n=2); Xhariep (n=2); Fezile Dabi (n=1) and Thabo Mofutsanyana Districts (n=3). The school phases represented were: Foundation Phase [FP] (n=2); FP and Intermediate Phase [IP] (n=5); IP and Senior Phase [SP] (n=2); SP (n=1). The sample was strongly affected by the availability of the SUBADVs, and as an unfortunate consequence the exclusion of one teaching phase, namely FET, emerged. Conversely, the number of interviewees was eventually deemed appropriate, as a saturation point was reached during data analysis with no new information emerging from the iterative data (Patton, 2002).

### **Ethical considerations**

The entire process was executed with due consideration to all ethical aspects in qualitative research. The FSDoE granted permission to conduct the research and district coordinators assisted in providing contact details of subject advisors in the province. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Board of the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State (UFS) (UFS-EDU-2014-037). The participants were treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines outlined by the Ethics Board of the UFS and the approval and conditions specified by the FSDoE, which entails ethical considerations, such as protection from harm and voluntary participation. Written informed consent was obtained and participants’ right to privacy and anonymity were assured in terms of any publications forthcoming from the study.

### **Data collection**

In 2015, provincial and district subject advisors from the FSDoE were approached with a brief overview of the research. Logistical issues forced the researcher to revert from planned focus group discussions to individual interviews with those subject advisors who could avail themselves during the period of data collection. Data for this project were gathered over a period of six months in the course of 2015 and early 2016, by means of in-depth semi-structured interviews with SUBADVs. Interviews sought to identify issues, challenges and difficulties that subject advisors experience in their task to assist and support teachers with regard to the subject area of LS and LO, in particular with the implementation and presentation of Physical

Education. Face-to-face interviews were conducted at the convenience and availability of the SUBADVs at their respective district offices.

Questions firstly focused on general challenges of LS/LO from the SUBADVs' point of view and their perceptions of the challenges that teachers face. A question addressed the difficulties teachers experience with the implementation of CAPS. Questions directed more specifically to PE investigated what contributed to problems with the topic and how it could be addressed. Sample questions focusing on PE included:

- Which difficulties do you experience when supporting/advising the teachers who teach Physical Education?
- Which strategies/recommendations/solutions would you like to propose to address these problems/issues?

### **Data analysis**

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data. Data were recorded by means of field notes and audiotaping. Data collected were transcribed verbatim by the primary researcher and analysed initially by the researcher who conducted the interviews with the participants. Guided by Merriam (2009:29) who argues that "the investigator is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis", the data were organised into structured themes, whereby an "inductive stance was assumed to strive to derive meaning from the data, resulting in theory that emerges from or is 'grounded' in the data, hence, grounded theory".

The interview transcripts were analysed independently by reading the text several times to gain meaning, and codes and categories were allocated to extracts of text by the primary researcher. The interview results were read and extracts of text then allocated to coded items (categories). The text of the interview transcripts were imported into SAS 9.4 Software (SAS, 2014). Triangulation of data analysis included searching transcripts programmatically for the extracts of text that were identified and assigning relevant codes to each interview/question, resulting in interview outcomes.

The two methods of analysing the data (primary researcher's inductive coding and the coding/programming of the results by independent statistical analysis) served to validate the results, as it was comparable from two separate sources. According to Cohen and Manion (1985), a combination of methods and investigators in the same study can contribute to the richness of the data and insights. Hence, engaging multiple methods of document analyses, increase trustworthiness (Maree, 2007).

## **RESULTS**

The results presented in Table 1 are according to seven themes identified from the interviews and supported by field notes and statistical analyses. The three most prominent themes that emerged were inadequate facilities and resources; lack of knowledge and understanding of PE. The need for training and workshops will be discussed, as it highlights the unique challenges SUBADVs of LS and LO face with regard to their supporting role.

**Table 1. SUMMARY OF OPINIONS OF SUBADV<sub>s</sub> (A-J) ON PE**

Themes	SUBADV <sub>s</sub>										Frequency of use in interviews*
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
Lack of importance of PE	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		31
Inadequate facilities and resources				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	48
Need for training and workshops	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		32
Lack of knowledge and understanding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		41
Inappropriate allocation of teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		19
Rotation of teachers	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			18
Assessment problems	✓	✓	✓			✓					15
Lack of funding								✓	✓	✓	9

\*A SUBADV could mention a theme more than once (the opinions could be summarised in a theme with similar responses). Multiple opinions of SUBADV<sub>s</sub> were summarised per theme.

### **Inadequate facilities and resources**

One problem that was mentioned frequently during interviews was inadequate resources. This includes facilities, apparatus and financial resources. This problem is twofold: firstly, the SUBADV<sub>s</sub> experience the consequences of the shortages in executing their specific duties and responsibilities and, secondly, the problems schools and teachers encounter regarding these shortages and the ramifications thereof in the classroom. The circumstances of SUBADV<sub>s</sub> impact greatly on their supporting role, as the district offices prove to be the biggest challenge preventing them from doing their work effectively, with a scarcity of financial, physical and human resources seen as having a dominant negative impact.

*At district level ... we are having a problem of transport, you want to go to a school, but you don't have transport.*

*We do not have ... photocopy paper, printers.*

*The telephone is not working, photocopy machines, not working.*

There is a shortage in person power, which implies that workshops cannot take place and teachers have to cope without adequate support, "we are leaving it to the teachers to see how they are doing it".

In addition to the difficulties SUBADV<sub>s</sub> experience with insufficient resources, they acknowledge that a lack of resources in schools also proves to be the prevalent barrier teachers face preventing them from implementing CAPS effectively as required by the policy. SUBADV<sub>s</sub> are duly frustrated, as one participant stated:



*I wouldn't want to listen to the challenges, I want the results ... I want the implementation, you can't come and tell me that you don't have a ground, you don't have a ball, ... I'm not going to tell you how to improvise ... it goes back to the issue of resources ...*

The Department of Education cannot provide adequate resources for all the schools. Currently a disparity exists between certain urban schools and township schools.

*The masses of them, in the township schools, they are really lacking these facilities.*

One participant explains it from the teachers' point of view:

*Our teachers, even if you say – improvise, they will say like, how long should we improvise?*

Limited funding has an impact, as funds are usually allocated to matters with a 'higher priority'. The added frustration becomes clear in the following comment by a participant:

*I remember 1996 there was this talk about redressing the past imbalances, I'm still waiting to see that.*

SUBADVs attest that in some cases, teachers go to desperate measures in order to provide children with opportunities to participate, such as purchasing skipping ropes from their own funds. Whereas some schools do not have facilities at all, others do not have a suitable space for outdoor PE classes. It should be noted that inadequate facilities are also not conducive to learners' safety:

*It's too rocky outside, they don't even have ... a soccer field outside ...*

*It's pure, pure ground, stones are there, glass are there – the safety measures are also the problem.*

A participant pointed out that learners' socio-economic backgrounds could become a barrier to participation. Hazardous, unsuitable surfaces necessitate appropriate shoes that they cannot afford, which may result in learners playing soccer or netball with school shoes, which increases the risk of getting injured.

On the other hand, teachers will use the lack of facilities and resources as an excuse 'not to do anything'. It is, however, very disconcerting to note that the availability of facilities does not guarantee the optimal use thereof. One participant reiterated that even if all the sport equipment is available, it may remain unused and is 'gathering dust'. This was confirmed by another participant, who described a sponsorship where schools were provided with a bag of sporting equipment, which included equipment for rugby, table tennis, tennis and soccer. Even with necessary equipment, the hindrance in implementing came from the teacher described by the participant as "an old lady of 55" who vindicated not supplying a report by:

*I am old, now I'm going for pension, you know this thing of Physical Education, I'm not interested in it, I was given ... it by the principal ...*

*Sometimes I think that they [teachers] simply don't want to.*

Therefore, the comment made by the last participant, may not seem too far-fetched.

In addition, a lack of maintenance and theft also impact negatively on the situation. According to a participant who attended a certain school in the district himself, the school was

fully equipped for PE with a multipurpose hall and sufficient apparatus, “but today you can't find a single thing there; not even a mat; it's not there; it just disappeared”.

### **Lack of knowledge and understanding**

Eight of the participants disclosed, without being questioned, that they were not qualified in PE.

*Most of us, if not all ... the whole team is not ... trained in PE, so it is really a challenge for us ... to also assist teachers ... I think in our team, our Provincial team, it is only one person who is a PE specialist ...*

One participant admitted:

*When I go to school, I never touch it, I don't want to lie ... I never say anything, I ... don't ask when I get to school, what do you do in PE?*

SUBADVs feel incapacitated to assist teachers with the practical execution, and one participant mentioned that to elude exposure, he purposefully avoided it. SUBADVs that are not trained or uncomfortable with a specific subject area have to rely on colleagues who are more familiar with a specific topic to assist in terms of particular content. In some districts, there are no subject coordinators to guide and support the SUBADVs with their unique challenges. A participant stated:

*The biggest challenge, really is true that we don't have, up to now; we have not received a specific training on how to handle PE at school.*

*With Physical Education, I am not a specialist. I don't know, that is that.*

It is the perception of SUBADVs that teachers experience difficulties with the application of the CAPS and move directly into practical work, without a real understanding of what to do.

*... going out there, throw one soccer ball to the kids, and let them play. They play there; unsupervised ... you can see that teachers don't actually know what is going on.*

Participants are of the opinion that teachers do not know how to maintain discipline, and/or to conduct a PE class or which procedures to follow. Apart from safety with regard to the environment, safety measures in terms of instructions are not addressed.

*They just let learners run around and play and do whatever they want to do ... what happens if a learner got injured on the grounds ... the teacher will be in trouble ... you have to follow the policy, it's the Bible ...*

According to a participant, the relevant teachers do not attend workshops, and although a textbook can be read, the interpretation requires in-depth knowledge of the content and theory.

*They don't attend workshops; they don't know what the requirements are; they don't read the policy ... they never, never read the policy ...*

Several participants came to the realisation that the accessibility of equipment does not necessarily mean PE will be efficiently implemented.

*Even the schools, are not giving teachers enough time ... to learn, and to be clued up with the subject ... our teachers are struggling with the content ... they don't get clued up with the policies, they are struggling with policies ... as to how to handle it, even though we are conducting the workshops.*

Therefore, it is clear that teachers do activities without comprehending or focusing on the skills that need to be developed through the activity.

*... so it becomes just a useless activity ...*

*... the schools in the township, it is because teachers are not doing their work, they are not controlled and they are not doing quality work, they are not teaching the theory ...*

*If you do not know the content you don't know what to teach in terms of theory, because you cannot do practical's without mastering the theory.*

### **Training and workshops**

The majority of participants reiterated the need for teachers to undergo training and become qualified. One participant referred to “proper training” in order to understand the content and acquire the skills. A participant commented:

*We cannot forever train and train and train every time with new people. You won't find a general practitioner, tomorrow this person is not a general practitioner, they have ... moved this person to become ... a dentist or the dentist is now ... an optometrist ... but with us, we have people who are not specialists.*

Several participants referred to training they had undergone, which they felt was insufficient and did not concentrate on the practical implementation of the curriculum.

*The person who was doing that training, I felt like he was just a gym instructor ... we did some movements, we enjoyed ... but we did not really come to address what we need to address and how we should assist teachers when it comes to the policy.*

A participant further maintained that a workshop for teachers facilitated by a service provider did not succeed in the actual aim and nothing was really gained to assist teachers.

*... if we could get somebody who can train the subject advisors, maybe together with the teachers, who understands what the policy requirements are, who understands how assessment is done, who can give us strategies how to do it, ... if we are assisted with a person who can really advise us as how to approach it.*

Moreover, a participant explained:

*What we always do ... take 150 teachers to go and workshop them on Maths, the whole morning ... in the afternoon when they get tired, we call someone who can say something about LS, PE, so I think also the Department hasn't given it the priority ... the Department has got to play a part.*

A participant referred to a debate in the media about the training of teachers.

*... that we are taking teachers for only two hours or a day, and then in the end we expect to be ... knowledgeable in the particular subject, that they must be masters and they must teach, and now we can see, what those people were talking about, because some of the teachers you will find that they were trained in three or two subjects. They have the manuals and they have the information but in terms of implementing, we find that when they go back to their schools, there is a huge, huge problem. ... The people who are training in those subjects, are not the ones who teach the subjects.*

## DISCUSSION

Findings emanating from this study suggest that SUBADV's experience a number of challenges in their attempt to support teachers to effectively deliver PE. These challenges impact negatively on the role and responsibilities of the SUBADV in facilitating curriculum implementation. Noticeably, insufficient facilities and equipment to present PE and sport are a major concern. This is a finding that relates to the study pursued by Van Deventer (2012).

The importance of accessibility of PE and sports at school for all children in South Africa was accentuated by Gert Oosthuizen, the Deputy Minister of Sport, at the 2014 South African Sport and Recreation Conference (SASRECON, 6-8 October 2014) (Oosthuizen, 2014). However, the meaningful delivery of PE at many historically disadvantaged schools is still jeopardised because of a lack of basic resources (Walter, 2014).

Cleophas (2014) contends that the majority of South African schoolchildren have limited purposeful opportunity to participate in PE under the apartheid regime, but despite all the changes that have taken place post-1994 access to meaningful PE is still wanting. This view supports the contention that teachers' meagre subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are important contributors to the quality of education (DBE & HET, 2011).

Prinsloo (2007) argues that the presentation of PE programmes requires expert skills from teachers and that intensive training over a period in a number of problem areas is imperative. In addition, Prinsloo (2007) reports that the different provincial departments and the district offices attempted to train and support teachers. However, the quality and quantity of the training and support were not as successful and the support received from learning support facilitators was rather unsatisfactory. They also failed to visit the schools on a regular basis and could not provide assistance, due to a lack of knowledge or problem solving skills (Prinsloo, 2007).

It is obvious that a symbiotic relationship exists between the SUBADV's and the LS/LO teachers they serve, and the continuous interaction between these two systems impact each other reciprocally. Therefore, it would appear imperative that collaboration between those assigned (SUBADV's) with the responsibility of supporting teachers in the implementation of the curriculum and those responsible for the execution (teachers) of the curriculum are efficient so that congruence can be obtained between actual and desired delivery of PE.

## CONCLUSION

Curriculum reform in South Africa has seemingly proven to be an impediment for the delivery of PE. The status and state of PE at schools at present, coupled with the impact on implementation of the curriculum, have clearly been a case of three steps forward and two steps back which was not taking PE forward purposefully. Based on the results of this study, it is evident that SUBADV's face copious challenges with regard to the implementation of the diverse LO curricula, and in particular with supporting teachers to deliver quality PE. Within an ecosystemic framework, PE should succeed where SUBADV's and teachers are trained, committed and passionate and interact in an interdependent and balanced way. The absence of qualified SUBADV's and teachers, the lack of facilities and resources to present PE and the need for appropriate in-service training for SUBADV's and teachers are evident and need to be addressed without deferment, for the sake of the health of South Africa's children.

Finally, as SUBADVs appear to be essential for the successful implementation of the curriculum, it is encouraging that they regard LS/LO as a very important subject, as is best reflected through the comments of one participant, who suggested:

*It is the core-subject ... the mother of all ... we normally refer to it as an alpha and omega. You can build the learners through Life Skills and Life Orientation, but you can also destroy them”.*

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